

The federal government's imposition of additional flight reductions at O'Hare International Airport due to congestion and delays is negatively impacting the Illinois economy, Congressman Jesse Jackson Jr. said today.

"Every lost flight is lost economic opportunity for tourism, conventions and international business meetings," Jackson said. "If Chicago and Illinois want to remain the economic and travel center of our nation, they must increase aviation capacity quickly and affordably."

"Twice in the past year the FAA has ordered cutbacks at O'Hare," Jackson said. "Those cuts are starting to trickle down by hitting our state in the pocketbook."

"Our leaders in Springfield and Chicago must act, and act soon, if we hope to keep up with market demand. If not, we must prepare to continue losing market share and jobs," Jackson said.

The need for a third airport is nothing new, Jackson added. "Mayor Richard Daley the First proposed building a third airport in Lake Michigan 25 years ago. This Mayor Daley proposed building an airport at Lake Calumet a dozen years ago. The time to build is past due."

Jackson said the South Suburban Airport Commission's proposed Abraham Lincoln National Airport is "the quick, easy, economical and logical answer."

"Abraham Lincoln National Airport complements O'Hare and Midway by providing new access for cargo and low-cost carriers, the fastest growing segments of the industry. Lincoln also won't compete with O'Hare improvements for federal funds because private developers will pay for it."

"Lincoln National can open by 2008 at a cost of \$200 million -- without federal, state or local taxes or airline subsidies. Moreover, the airport's revenue sharing plan will provide \$750 million for additional infrastructure needs on-site and off-site, again at no cost or risk to the taxpayer."

"Now more than ever, we need leaders who will utilize this unique opportunity to build the world's first low-cost airport and guarantee Chicago's role as the nation's aviation hub."